

Amendments to the Specification:

Amend page 1, lines 3-4, to read as follows:

--Cross-Reference to Related Applications

This is a continuation-in-part of International Application No. PCT/GB02/04382, filed 27th September 2002.--.

Amend page 1, lines 5-16, to read as follows:

--Background of the Invention

The present invention relates to methods for recovering hydrocarbons trapped in hydrate formations, and in particular to methods for the recovery of natural gas.

Hydrate formations are an example from a class of chemical compounds ~~known~~ known as clathrates. A clathrate is a form of compound in which one component is enclosed within the structure of another. In a hydrate formation, hydrocarbon (such as natural gas) is trapped in molecular cage-like structures formed by frozen water. Although the water molecules and the hydrocarbon molecules do not interact chemically, the hydrocarbon molecules are completely surrounded by the water molecules. The structure of the hydrate must therefore be disassociated in order to free the hydrocarbon. A cubic meter of natural gas hydrate contains typically 160 cubic meters of natural gas.--.

Amend page 3, lines 19-20, to read as follows:

--Summary of the Invention

In accordance with the present invention, there is provided a method for recovering hydrocarbon trapped in a hydrate formation, comprising the steps of:--.

Amend page 7, lines 28-29, to read as follows:

--Brief Description of the Drawings

A number of preferred embodiments of the invention will now be described, with references to the drawings, in which:--.

Amend page 7, line 35, to page 8, line 2, to read as follows:

--Detailed Description

Referring to Figure 1, a well bore 8 is drilled through impermeable cap rock 1 and permafrost 2 into hydrate formation 3 overlying natural gas reservoir 4. Well bore 8 has a casing 7 having an annulus sealed with cement to prevent the escape of gas from well bore 8.--.

Amend page 8, lines 32-37, to read as follows:

--Referring to Figure 2, two well bores 8a and 8b are drilled vertically through impermeable cap rock 1 and permafrost 2 into hydrate formation 3 overlying natural gas reservoir 4. Well bores 8a and 8b ~~are~~ have respective casings 7a and 7b, each of which has an annulus sealed with cement to prevent the escape of gas from well bores 8a and 8b respectively. Other parts of the arrangement of Figure 2 operate in the same manner as the arrangement of Figure 1.--.